

German Lutheran Church  
Waldoboro, Maine  
Lincoln Co.

HABS-ME-44

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PHOTOGRAPHS  
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA  
District of Maine

Historic American Buildings Survey  
Josiah T. Tubby, District Officer  
537 Congress Street, Portland, Maine

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"GERMAN LUTHERAN CHURCH"  
(Waldoboro Meeting House)  
Waldoboro, Lincoln County, Maine

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Owners

German Protestant Society

Date of Erection

About 1773

Builders

Built by German Colonists who settled Waldoboro.

Present Condition

The building is in a good state of preservation and its appearance has probably not been materially changed since its early days but it has been moved from the site on which it was originally located.

Description

A two and one half story frame building with clapboarded walls and gable roof. Two story stairs hall with entrances at each side. No chimneys. Twenty light sash. The exterior of the building is quite plain and entrances are simple in design.

The enclosed box pews in the meeting house are approximately five feet square. A gallery surrounds three sides of the church. The pulpit is the outstanding feature of the meeting house. The pulpit desk is nine feet above the floor. It is elaborately decorated. The sounding board above the pulpit is carved and ornamented. The balcony rail is decorated with raised panels. The communion table and contribution boxes are original.

The sills and floor timbers of the church are white pine and black ash and average 12"x 13". The supporting beams for the gallery are about 10" square.

Other Existing Records

History of Waldoboro by Samuel L. Miller-Publisher-Emerson, Wiscasset, 1911.

The German Colonists who settled Waldoboro (then known as Broad Bay) in 1748, built a meeting house previous to the building of the one now standing. This first meeting house is said to have been built in 1760. The settlers volunteered their services and built this first meeting house entirely of native materials. Without doubt, this was planned only as a temporary church. The dimensions of it were about 28' x 36'. Built of spruce and hemlock, the logs were hewn, dovetailed at the corners. The floor was of hewn planks, and the roof made of long slabs lined with strips of birch bark to make it weather tight. Pews were crude and hand hewn. The pulpit, however, was evidently quite attractive. It is said to have stood six feet from the floor, large enough for the preacher, yet very light in weight. It is described as semi-circular at the top. The first windows of this church were sheepskin. Probably the reason for this crude structure was the poverty of the community. Near the site of this old meeting house are some of the graves of the original German settlers of Waldoboro.

No written record of the history of the present meeting house is in existence. This meeting house was standing in 1773 because when the first town meeting was called that year by Act of General Court of Massachusetts, the place designated in the warrant for holding the meeting was "at the westerly meeting house" indicating that there were two meeting houses. Probably the first little meeting house was still standing. Plans for building the new meeting house were made in 1770. The lot of land was donated by Christopher Newbert and the building was erected near the east bank of the River. It stood near the point where travellers passing west and east were ferried across and the ferry may have influenced building there. The church was moved to another location before it was finally completed. The lot reserved for it was nearly opposite the original site and probably the grave yard there was started before the church was moved. The frame of the church was taken down and reassembled. Dr. John Christopher Walleazer had charge of the moving. The church was moved during the winter of 1795. In 1804, the society voted to pay the claim in full for services rendered in rebuilding the meeting house. The last town meeting was held in the church in 1794.

The German Protestant Society in Waldoboro was organized April 2, 1800 under an act of General Court of Massachusetts, entitled "An act to incorporate a Religious Society in the Town of Waldoborough." This Society has had continuous existence since 1800. Credit for the preservation of the meeting house is due the society.

An inscription on a gravestone in the cemetery adjoining the church reads as follows:

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CONRAD HEYER

Born April 10, 1749

Died Feb. 19, 1856

Aged 106 years.

Conrad Hoyer was the first white child born in Waldoboro.  
He served three years in the Revolutionary War.

On another tablet in the cemetery is the following inscription.

"This town was settled in 1748 by Germans who emigrated to this place with the promise and expectation of finding a populous city, instead of which they found nothing but a wilderness; for the first few years they suffered to a great extent by Indian Wars and starvation; by perseverance and self denial they succeeded in clearing lands and erecting mills. At this time a large proportion of the inhabitants are descendants of the first settlers. This monument was erected A. D. 1855 by the subscriptions of citizens of this town."

*Eleanor Jannell*

Approved:

*Joshua T. Tully*

June 14, 1937

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7/28/37